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THE EARLY HISTORY

Lacan's Symbolic intimates that 'one requires a certain faith to tolerate and respect the gaps through which the life of authentic meaning unfolds'.¹ There are many gaps in the following narrative which is not so much about historical fact as about a series of acts of faith by a number of individuals, often based on little more than a vague awareness of what Bion has called some 'ultimate reality'², some awareness of emotional truth which is unknown and unknowable but to which one must attend. The events in this narrative all begin from the idea that psychoanalysis provides one way to attend to this.

Talking about the development of psychoanalysis is not psychoanalysis and may not tell us what it is. Nevertheless as Freud suggested it does constitute a body of theory, a research tool and a method of treatment. It is only in the latter role that we talk of psychoanalysts trained in a particular method of treatment. Although today's proliferation of psychological treatments mostly derive from a psychoanalytic understanding of unconscious processes, it is to the two former categories, a body of theory and a research tool, that we must look in understanding the past. This narrative therefore might be more accurately described as the early history of the development of a particular way of thinking in Australia.

The Beginnings

The Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis was opened with great celebration by the late Judge Foster on the birthday of its benefactor, Miss Lorna Traill, 10 October 1940. Among those present were psychiatrists, members of the Educational Research Council, staff of the Teachers' Training College and journalists. The Institute at 111 Collins Street was

not quite finished. There were not yet any inner walls or private rooms (how appropriate as a paradigm for the unconscious), but this did leave room for a bigger party. Within a few months rooms were constructed and Dr Geroe, the analyst appointed to the Institute, was able to begin work in February 1941.³ The following day the story headline in the *Sun News Pictorial* ran 'World Soul Centre Opens in Melbourne'.

This was the beginning, and it is the point at which I will end. Some forty years later the Australian Psychoanalytic Society remains a small group with only 28 members or associates currently qualified. The activities of the Australian Society have been for the most part aimed towards internal scientific and educational functions, and at an institutional level there has not for many years been any activity aimed at linking the Society with the community at large, in either intellectual discussion or areas of joint interest or application. It seems unlikely therefore that in any programme of the 50th anniversary of psychoanalysis in Australia there will be, as there was recently in Chicago, a series of programmes ranging from a workshop on the borderline syndrome, to discussions on psychoanalysis and religion, the cinema, anthropology, law, creativity, ageing, business and political science. This in no way indicates a lack of interest by individual psychoanalysts in these areas; rather it is a reflection of the origins of the psychoanalytic movement here, the long years of isolation, the neglect and even open hostility towards the new movement, and perhaps, most importantly, the great difficulty in establishing in Australia an independent society with clinical standards appropriate for full membership of The International Psychoanalytical Association.

The establishment of an Institute for Psychoanalysis in Melbourne with its one and only training analyst, Clara Lazar Geroe, was the result of an enormous amount of endeavour and effort from a large number of people and the interest and goodwill of even more. The Institute remained closely connected to the British Society for Psychoanalysis and was an associate society of it until 1971. It was only in 1973 that the Australian Society was ratified as an independent member group of the International Society for Psychoanalysis.

Freud and Australia

There are several references to Australia in Ernest Jones' *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*. In a letter to his fiancée Martha Bernays in 1882 Freud, disconsolate about being able to earn a living in Vienna, contemplates emigrating 'to England, or perhaps America or Australia'. On his thirtieth birthday he writes again to Martha, 'if only you would wake me with a kiss I should be quite indifferent to where we were, in America, Australia, or anywhere'.⁴ We were evidently close in phantasy, if not in reality to attracting not a part but the whole of psychoanalysis to this country. But one wonders whether the climate and atmosphere here would have nurtured Freud's genius as did Vienna at that time, critical though it may have been.

In the second volume⁵ Jones reports Freud having received a letter from

Australia telling him of a group there eagerly studying his work. 'Things were stirring also as far off as Australia.' Jones then refers to the information supplied by Dr Roy Winn of Sydney concerning a Donald Fraser who had supposedly 'had to resign as a minister from the Presbyterian Church on account of his "Freudian views" — the first instance, but far from being the last, of this kind of victimisation'. But, as Angus McIntyre has discovered, Winn's information was wrong; Fraser's dismissal from the church was related to ecclesiastical and personal difficulties.⁶ Fraser does however seem to have been interested in psychology, engaging in what McIntyre calls 'psychotherapeutics' after his graduation in medicine. Fraser's son was later Director of State Psychiatric hospitals in NSW and was reported to be extremely hostile to psychoanalysis and its adherents.⁷

In 1911 Freud, Jung and Havelock Ellis were invited to give papers to the Australasian Medical Congress. The Secretary of the Section of Psychological Medicine and Neurology, Dr Andrew Davidson, seems to have been greatly interested in analytic ideas. While all declined to be present they all sent papers which were read.⁸ Freud had suggested to Jung that they send a joint paper but Jung insisted that his be independent.⁹ Freud mentions the invitation in a letter to Ferenczi. After describing a visit from two interested young men from India (one of whom was John Sutherland, later Director of the Tavistock Institute) he says, 'Then two days ago a new continent announced itself. The Secretary of the Neurological Section of the Australian Congress disclosed itself as a subscriber to the *Jahrbuch*, and asks for a short account of my theories which is to be printed in the reports of the Congress since they are still quite unknown in Australia'. Freud ended his letter, 'no sign of life yet from Africa'.¹⁰

Havelock Ellis had an earlier tie with Australia, having arrived here in 1875, a shy sickly careerless sixteen year old. Chance put him in the way of a teaching post and his father, the captain of the vessel he had sailed in, agreed to leave him behind in Sydney. During his time here Ellis's introspective discoveries led him to decide on a medical career and he left Australia in his twentieth year to study medicine. Ernest Jones contributed a paper to the 1914 Australian Medical Congress.¹¹

Australia's First Psychoanalysts

The first practising trained psychoanalyst in Australia was Dr Roy Coupland Winn (1890-1963). He graduated in medicine at Sydney University in 1915 and after working as a resident medical officer he enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps Service and was overseas in the First World War. Initially as Captain and later as Major, he had a war record of great distinction, serving at Gallipoli and on the Somme and being wounded in the battle of Messines where he lost his right foot. He was mentioned in despatches and was awarded the Military Cross. In 1919 he returned to Australia to work briefly as a medical officer and after two years returned to England for further medical and psychiatric training. It was during this

time in London that he gained experience in psychoanalysis. He became an associate and finally full member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. After practising briefly on his return to Sydney as an Honorary Physician at Sydney Hospital, in 1931 he went into fulltime psychoanalytic practice, the first in Australia to do so.¹² During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Dr Winn was active in helping the establishment of the Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis and had several months of analysis from Dr Geroe after her arrival. He was on the Board of Directors from the inception of the Institute in 1940 until his death. In 1951 he made a generous endowment which made possible the founding of the second training Institute in this country, the Sydney Institute for Psychoanalysis with Dr Andrew Peto, also from Hungary, as training analyst.

Mike Thornhill and Frank Moorhouse's film *Between Wars* had a central character thought to be modelled on the personality and experiences of Dr Winn. A somewhat cynical review of the film in the *Nation Review* mocks the doctor hero as a 'half-hearted disciple of Sigmund Freud suffering for his beliefs'.¹³ The review goes on to say that 'Freud was nothing as fashionable in Sydney in the 1920s and 1930s as he was in London and New York but who suffered from espousing him? Sydney's best known Freudian, Roy Coupland Winn, practised in Macquarie Street and prospered'. The review then mentions the erroneous information about Donald Fraser discussed earlier and goes on to add, 'I'd be surprised to learn that he also failed to make a quid'. In fact Dr Winn did not prosper as a psychoanalyst. He frequently reduced his fees considerably for those in need and acquired the major part of his income from a private source.

The next qualified and practising psychoanalyst was a Dr Fink, an associate member of the Swiss Psychoanalytic Society, who emigrated here from Germany in 1938. He worked initially with mental health services in New South Wales and then entered private practice. Like Dr Winn he was not a training analyst, but he took part in discussion groups and workshops in the early days of the Melbourne Institute.

The third qualified analyst and Australia's first training analyst was Dr Clara Lazar Geroe. In many ways her life and personality were the model for the early development of psychoanalysis in this country. She was a charming, cultured and intelligent woman whose dedication to psychoanalysis as art and science, was only overruled by her dedication to her patients. A reluctant refugee from growing instability and persecution in Europe, her migration was part of the dispersal of the European psychoanalytic movement. She brought with her a great love of psychoanalysis and in particular its application to the education and development of children, and a life-long nostalgia for the early days of the psychoanalytic movement with its camaraderie and intellectual radicalism. Her enthusiasm for the development of formal psychoanalysis in Australia was always tempered with her strongly held belief that the community at every level should have the opportunity to explore psychoanalysis as a meaningful intellectual and philosophical discipline and to develop techniques for its application within society.

The Establishment of the Institute

On the 20th of July 1938 Ernest Jones received a letter from Paul Dane, a psychiatrist in Melbourne, saying that Dr Winn in Sydney had contacted him regarding some analysts who were forced to leave their own country and wished to come to Melbourne. Dr Dane guaranteed that he would himself become a patient at once and he could think of one or two other medical men who would also undergo 'a course'. He described difficulties in having the Government recognise foreign medical men and commented that especially in Melbourne there was a strong prejudice against Freudian psychoanalysis. For his own part, however, he said, that although he had not been analysed he had endeavoured to treat patients by pure Freudian analysis with a fair amount of success. He also asked Dr Jones whether there was any possibility that Dr Roheim might come out, in which case the problem of registration would not occur. He offered all the help he could to Dr Jones or any of his colleagues who might request it. (Roheim had visited Australia in 1928 but does not appear to have made contact with Dr Winn or other interested psychiatrists.)

Paul Dane was born in Belfast and came to Australia as a child. He was educated at Caulfield Grammar and at the University of Melbourne, graduating in 1905 and taking an M.D. in 1909. He was the Assistant Medical Officer of Health for the City of Melbourne for two years and then moved into private practice initially in Ballarat. In the First World War he had served at Gallipoli as a Major promoted to Lieutenant Colonel but was



Dr Paul Dane

invalided out. He volunteered for service in the Second World War but was not accepted; however he was extremely well known for his rousing recruiting speeches.

He had a reputation for being 'an irritable but loveable Irishman'. Shortly after the First World War he was one of the first in Australia to use hypnosis and probably the first to employ abreaction as a technique. Realising it was able to aid greater numbers than could other forms of psychotherapy, he was the first to introduce group therapy for ex-soldiers and civilians. His interest in Freud was an early one and in 1928 he left Australia for a prolonged visit to Europe and commenced an analysis with Joan Riviere. Personal contacts were later made with Anna Freud. He had many interests and whilst abroad spent time in France with his friend Sir Colin McKenzie looking for traces of primitive human types. He was a great horseman and for several years President of the Royal Zoological Society of Victoria. Whilst earlier in life he was attracted to socialism in 1910, as a result of hearing a lecture on Henry George, he became a convinced exponent of the doctrine of the single tax and played a leading part in the Henry George Society for many years. He often said that his whole life was dominated by the teaching of two great men, Freud and George.¹⁴ Strange bedfellows. On his return to Australia and with the influence of Clarence Godfrey, an early exponent of hypnosis, and John Springthorpe he followed his interest in Freud's theories whilst working at the Alfred Hospital Psychiatric Clinic. He remained, until 1938, virtually the sole voice and exponent in Australian medical psychiatric circles of psychoanalytic theory.

At the time of writing to Ernest Jones, Dr Dane had become aware of the fact that a certain Miss Lorna Traill was thinking of making a gift toward the establishment of psychotherapeutic work in Melbourne. Miss Traill's initial thought was to donate five thousand pounds, but with the growing anxiety concerning war and her own apparent ambivalence on the subject the amount was gradually whittled down to three thousand, and ultimately fifteen hundred, pounds. Nevertheless Dr Dane, now surrounded by an interested group of psychiatrists, convinced her that whilst a psychotherapeutic clinic along the lines of the Tavistock would be admirable, the way ahead really lay with psychoanalysis. With some reluctance Miss Traill agreed.

As Hitler's armies advanced through Europe many analysts left for England and America and attempts were made to gain entry permits to New Zealand for a group of Hungarian analysts including Dr Clara Geroe. After these attempts failed efforts began to try to bring the analysts to Australia. Dr Winn in Sydney and Dr Dane in Melbourne, together with Doctors Ellery, Reynolds, Silberburg and Albiston, took up their case with the British Medical Association and the Immigration Department, together with the backing of numerous well known people including Dr Moses, Chairman of the A.B.C., Mr Duncan Hall, and Bishop Burgman, the Anglican Bishop of Goulbourn. Letters passed from Duncan Hall and Dane to the Head of the Department of the Interior in Canberra in March 1939 naming Clara Lazar Geroe, Andrew Peto, Elizabeth Kardos and Eva

Rosenfeld as possible Australian immigrants. Duncan Hall drummed up others who were supportive: Professors Brown, Kenneth Bailey and Crawford in Melbourne; Dr Fry, the City Health Officer and Dr Hone, together with Professor Porteus in Adelaide; Dr Bedford Elwells, President of the League of Nations Society in Brisbane; Kenneth Binns, a Parliamentary Librarian in Canberra; Canon Edwards of the Canberra Grammar School, and Colonel Hodgson and Mr Watt of the Department of External Affairs.

Dr Winn was active reassuring the Secretaries of various Medical Boards that the psychoanalysts would not compete with doctors. There was a series of letters in early 1939, all the above were contacted and psychoanalysis was both explained and apologised for, and the hopeful migrants were investigated, criticised and praised. In April 1939 Dr Geroe herself sent a brief summary of all intending migrants adding two more to the list, a Maxamillian Steiner and Stephen Shomburger. By July 1939 it was settled. Only one was admitted, Dr Geroe herself, her husband and small son, George. Ultimately it seems to have been the fact that she was the only one with a child which obtained the requisite visa for her. It was sentimentality not humanitarianism nor good judgement which prevailed.

Dr Geroe and her family arrived in Australia in March of 1940. Shortly before correspondence had passed between Dane and Rickman, the latter writing several pages of instructions and advice concerning the leasing of facilities, money involved and general administrative matters in the setting up of an Institute. Patients fees, candidates training and fees, including budgeting for difficulties of trainees carrying their own fees, were described. Candidates were presumed to have an aptitude for the work, either a medical qualification or a degree in science or some equivalent, or to show such gifts that would lead the training committee to waive other regulations. The relationship between the Institute and the Society was set out quite clearly, remaining for many years the model of the Melbourne Institute and Society.

The Institute was opened on 10th October 1940, the birthday of its benefactress. The original Directors of the Board were Doctors Dane, Ellery, Albiston, Winn and Albert Phillips. In Dr Geroe's opening talk she emphasised how happy she was to be in Australia and how wonderful it was that with so many Institutes closed in Europe a new one was founded on another continent. She outlined plans to have a clinic including a childrens clinic, to have contact with schools and the Childrens Court and parents, to establish a Library and to train people, medical, educational and psychological, through open lectures.

The opening of the Institute did not go unnoticed in medical circles. A letter on the 31st of October 1940 to Reg Ellery, then Honorary Secretary of the Section of Neurology and Psychiatry of the B.M.A. read as follows:

The attention of my Council having been directed to an article in 'The Sun' newspaper on Saturday, October 19th 1940, headed 'Melbourne May Be World Soul-Cure Centre', I am instructed to request that the Section of Neurology and Psychiatry will furnish a statement setting out its views and opinions of the In-



Clara Geroe's consulting rooms at 111 Collins Street.

stitute of Psycho-Analysis which has, apparently, recently been established in Melbourne.

It was signed by the then medical secretary of the B.M.A. An extract from that subsequent meeting makes very interesting reading. The B.M.A. were highly offended that their Council had not been asked to appoint a representative, some members had forseen the trend before the clinic started but their advice had not been heeded etc. The lady, Dr Geroe, was taken to task, her qualifications queried, and it was noted that the actual work of psychoanalysing was to be done by an unregistered alien. The B.M.A. Council were clearly up in arms, both with Dr Geroe and with those members who had offered her support and protection. The B.M.A. seems however to have been stymied by a section of the medical act. This section was to the effect that action could be taken by the Board only in the public interest and they would therefore have to wait for a complaint. They would then require a police officer to make an investigation and subsequently, with the assistance of the Crown Solicitor, the Board could take action.

Ultimately the matter was settled, partly by the intervention of the neurologist Dr Robertson who thought it wise to let the clinic function. He felt it was better to have the clinic under the wing of the medical profession than to let psychoanalysts run their separate Institutes as did the osteopaths.

The following month Dane received a reply to his request to Ernest Jones to accept the post of a Director of the Institute. Jones accepted although commenting that he would probably remain an Honorary Director. The following extract from his letter is significant if one takes into account some of the changes in the Melbourne Institute in subsequent years and in the Australian Society at the present time, in regard to its contact with non-analytic colleagues.

At the outset I would say that the cardinal mistake which I have seen committed many times in the founding of new psychoanalytical Institutes or Societies, has been the over ambitious hastiness of enrolling too many people on the score of their being 'interested in psychoanalysis', many of whom prove subsequently, when their natural resistences are mobilised to be a great hindrance to the work.

Jones finished his letter by commenting on the European situation, the German advance, the danger to himself and his wife who was of Viennese extraction, and their own thoughts that they might also choose Australia as a most attractive and desirable country. So many promises but so few results. He congratulated Dr Dane on the choice of Dr Geroe and urged her to concentrate everything on the acquiring of good English and to go slowly in all other respects. She is he said 'an excellent woman'.

Clinical work started on 15 January 1941 and in the first year there were consultations with twenty-nine adult patients. A children's clinic started in May 1949 one afternoon a week. Because of the difficulty of seeing children after school work was done chiefly in an advisory capacity with teachers, social workers, nurses and probation officers for the Children's Court. Lectures and seminars were organised on a wide range of topics.

Today the Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis is one of three centres in Australia which offer theoretical and clinical training to medical and non-medical candidates. Unlike much of the rest of the world where centres of training are confined to one or two major cities, London, New York, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, the small number available for teaching in this country are divided between Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Despite scientific meetings twice annually, communication is at times difficult and the manpower resources available to attract and train interested individuals are limited, particularly when one takes into account that all candidates must be undergoing personal analysis with some member of their training Institute with whom they can have no other contact.

Nevertheless individual psychoanalysts in all centres have contributed significantly to other intellectual and clinical areas. More than seventy per cent of members work part-time in other Institutions or Hospitals, and the influence of their analysands in both academic and health-care delivery areas has expanded dramatically. Both interest and expertise groups,

although having no formal links with the Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis, draw significantly from its membership for participation in theoretical discussions and clinical supervision where appropriate.

It may be that such organisations will in turn rekindle within the central psychoanalytic movement an interest and enthusiasm in the broader connotations of psychoanalysis. Clinically the necessity for more cost-effective treatments in mental illness throws out a challenge to the psychoanalytic movement which may be met in the future, not only by maintaining high clinical standards and expertise, but also by reforging previous links to the best that is available in educational, academic and intellectual circles within Australia.

Notes

- ¹ M. Eigen, 'The Area of Faith in Winnicott, Lacan and Bion', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol 62 (1982), p. 413.
- ² W.R. Bion, *Attention and Interpretation in Seven Servants* (Jason Aronson, New York, 1977).
- ³ Frank Graham, Address on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis, *Australian Psychiatric Bulletin*, December 1965, p. 31.
- ⁴ Published by Hogarth Press, London, 1953, Vol 1, pp. 196-197.
- ⁵ Jones, Vol 2, pp. 85-86.
- ⁶ 'The Reverend Donald Fraser', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol 2 (1978), p. 109.
- ⁷ A. McIntyre, personal communication, 1982.
- ⁸ The papers presented were: Jung, 'The Doctrine of Complexes'; Freud, 'On Psychoanalysis'; Ellis, 'The Doctrines of the Freud School'. *Transactions of the Australasian Medical Congress*.
- ⁹ Jones, Vol 2, p. 86.
- ¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 100.
- ¹¹ The paper 'Some Practical Aspects of Psychoanalytic Treatment' was read by Dr James Boyd of Auckland. *Transactions of the Australasian Medical Congress*, 1914, Vol 10.
- ¹² Obituary by F.W. Graham, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1965, p. 616.
- ¹³ D. Jenkyn, 'Fourteen Days', 6.12.74.
- ¹⁴ Obituary by A. Phillips, *Medical Journal of Australia*, 1950, pp. 946-947.